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VI.—*Recent Educational Movements in their Relation to Language Study.*

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UNDER every great political, social, religious, and educational movement, there are found certain truths or principles that act as motive power. The movement may be very complex and varied in its manifestations, but the underlying truths or principles are generally clear and simple. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, for example, with all the civil and ecclesiastical disturbances it brought about, was based on these two well-known principles: 1. Men are saved by faith alone; and 2. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice in religion. The American Revolution, with all its multiplicity of events, was founded on the principle that taxation without representation is tyranny. Illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely; but the truth will hardly be questioned that great movements in society generally derive their impulse from one or more principles which admit of perspicuous statement.

When the principles or truths that originate a general movement are once announced, usually at first in a more or less imperfect form, they win the assent and support of growing numbers of people. The judgment of the masses, when they are unbiased by passion or selfishness, is usually sound. The proverb *vox populi, vox Dei* is not always delusive. When the principles that appeal for popular support are erroneous, or when they affect no important interest of society, they will be received with but little favor. The zeal of agitators will be lost upon the intelligent inertia of society. It is only when the new principles advanced are believed to be true and conducive to the best interests of society that they gain adherents and ultimately conquer ascendancy. The victory may be long deferred; but if the principles underlying the movement are just, they will triumph in the end. When the agitation was

once begun, the abolition of slavery was inevitable; for the anti-slavery movement represented just views of human freedom. If the principles underlying recent educational movements are correct, we may confidently expect them to prevail.

That a great movement has been going on for some years in the educational world admits of no reasonable doubt. The present is justly regarded by many as a period of transition. First of all, there is an unexampled interest in education. Learning is no longer confined to any class; on the contrary, all Christian nations, and even some heathen nations, are making strong efforts to increase their facilities for popular instruction. The subjects of study have been largely increased in schools of every grade. In our colleges and universities the subjects of instruction have been so multiplied that it has become necessary to arrange parallel and elective courses. The mother tongue, modern languages, natural sciences, history and civics have won at least partial recognition. The harsh and mechanical methods of a few decades ago have been largely supplanted by scientific methods. Pupils do not exist for teachers, but teachers for pupils. It is thus seen that the educational movement of the present embraces a number of particulars; but in general it may be said to exhibit a single practical tendency; that is to say, it aims at such a training of the young as will fit them for life in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The way for recent educational changes has been in process of preparation for a long time. Not simply one, but many preachers in the wilderness have proclaimed the evils existing in the education of their day. Some of them, with prophetic eye, saw and foretold the advent of a better era. Montaigne, who held that the mother tongue and the languages of neighboring countries should be first learned, said: "No doubt Latin and Greek are very great ornaments, and of very great use; but we may buy them too dear." Bacon, to whom the present age is indebted beyond measure, threw off the tyranny which the ancients had so long exercised over human thought, and attained to an independence of judgment that enabled him to appreciate the treasures of the modern world. "It would indeed be dishonorable to mankind," he says, "if the regions of the natural globe, the earth, the sea, the stars, should be so prodigiously developed and illustrated in our

age, and yet the boundaries of the intellectual globe should be confined to the narrow discoveries of the ancients." Milton, who has treated of education with a fearless and masterly hand, declares that "a complete and generous education is that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." He condemns severely the "pure trifling at grammar and sophistry" which characterized the schools of his day. Comenius, the greatest educator of the seventeenth century, condemned the schools of his time, and pointed out with surprising acuteness and truth the path of reform. "Hitherto," he says, "the schools have not labored that the children might unfold like the young tree from the impulse of its own roots, but have been contented when they covered themselves with foreign branches. They have taught the youth, after the manner of Aesop's crow, to adorn themselves with strange feathers. Why shall we not, instead of dead books, open the living book of Nature? Not the shadows of things, but the things themselves, which make an impression on the senses and the imagination, are to be brought before youth. By actual observation, not by a verbal description of things, must instruction begin." Locke maintained that French should precede Latin, and that English should receive more attention than either. "This I think will be agreed to," he says, "that if a gentleman is to study any language, it ought to be that of his own country, that he may understand the language which he has constant use of with the utmost accuracy." These are some of the mighty voices that were raised against wrong subjects and methods—but voices that were hushed before the light of the new day blessed the earth.

As a rule the principles characterizing a great movement are the result of a process of development. Men are so influenced by environment, are so controlled by traditional ideas and prevailing customs, that they can not at once rise to a clear and full appreciation of newly-discovered truth. Many years elapsed, for example, before the Copernican system was generally adopted. The injustice of England continued a long time before the colonists were able to attain to the principles of human liberty set forth in the Declaration of Independence. The principles of education that supply impulse to current educational movements are no exception to the general law

of growth. Beginning with Montaigne, Bacon, and Comenius, a long line of educational reformers successively made contributions to the store of pedagogic truth. Finally, through the genius and selfdenying labors of Pestalozzi, the most influential schoolmaster of the present century, this body of truth was further developed, somewhat systematized, exemplified in practice, and brought to the attention of educators throughout Christendom. The principles, on which the progressive educational movements of the present are based, did not reach a tolerably complete scientific statement for more than two hundred years. It is only within the last decade or two that they have gained extensive recognition.

The science of education that is giving impulse and power to present educational movements and reforms is essentially Baconian. It is based on a careful study of man's nature. It assumes as a fundamental truth that the principles of education are to be derived from a study of the being to be educated. In its essential nature, education is regarded as a development of the physical, mental, and moral powers of the student. An impulse toward development is inherent in the various faculties of man. The function of the teacher is to direct and facilitate this natural growth, that each student may realize the best he is capable of. Pestalozzi has well said: "Sound education stands before me symbolized by a tree planted near fertilizing waters. A little seed, which contains the design of the tree, its form and proportions, is placed in the soil. See how it germinates and expands into trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit! The whole tree is an uninterrupted chain of organic parts, the plan of which existed in its seed and root. Man is similar to the tree. In the newborn child are hidden those faculties which are to unfold during life. The individual and separate organs of his being form themselves gradually into an harmonic whole, and build up humanity in the image of God." But education has another side that must not be disregarded. The being to be educated is destined to share in the world's activity. Various duties pertaining to his vocation, to the State, the Church, society, and the family, are to devolve upon him. The culture he receives should bear a just relation to the duties of practical life. The young should be educated for useful and righteous living in the world into which they have been born.

This is Milton's view, as expressed in a sentence already quoted. Comenius held that nothing should be taught that is not of practical utility. Herbert Spencer has declared with great force and justice that "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of any educational course is to judge in what degree it discharges such function."

In intellectual education we must begin with the senses. These are the avenues to the mind; and it is through them that the intellect is to be excited into activity and the foundation of all knowledge laid. The law of intellectual growth is exercise. There is little educating power in what the student receives passively. His interest must be awakened; his faculties must be active in grasping objects and truths; and whatever he studies must be kept within his power of comprehension and assimilation. During the first years of the pupil's progress, the concrete should precede the abstract in study; ideas should go before, or along with the words representing them; examples and operations should precede rules and principles. It is only after the pupil has reached a stage of considerable development that this order of instruction can properly be reversed. At no time should the studies pursued be of a nature to destroy mental elasticity—the condition most favorable to rapid development. Instruction should begin with what lies nearest the student, and thus appeals to his interest and wants. In this particular, Nature points us to the right path. The child begins by gaining a knowledge of its surroundings in the house; then it explores the unknown regions of the flower-yard and neighboring fields; as its strength increases, it learns the names and properties of the objects with which it has to deal. Beginning thus with what is near, our knowledge should go on increasing by ever-widening circles till we compass the remotest truth. As a rule, what the pupil learns should connect itself naturally with what he already knows. The educators are wrong who, at any point in the pupil's progress, suddenly transplant him in a region where everything is foreign to his nature.

We are now prepared to state and appreciate two of the fundamental principles underlying the educational movements of the present—principles that are active in changing subjects and methods:

1. Education consists in developing the physical, mental, and

moral powers of man in such a way that he can act his part to the best advantage in the world.

2. The law of this development is the student's own activity in learning facts, truths, and principles pertaining to nature, society, and God.

The adoption of these principles with all that they involve has been greatly favored by existing circumstances. The increasing prominence achieved by the masses since the American and the French Revolution, or to carry the principle back to its source, the growing appreciation of the worth of individual men as taught in the Gospels, goes far toward accounting for the general spread of education. International relations are growing closer every year, and already poets are beginning to dream of a federation of mankind. The vast enlargement of the field of knowledge—an enlargement that has rendered the old curriculum narrow and inadequate—explains the increased number of studies. A better understanding of the physical, intellectual, and moral nature of man has led to an abolition of the cruel methods in vogue a hundred years ago, and has demonstrated the truth that no two or three studies have a monopoly of educating power. In a word, the world has out-grown the swaddling clothes that were wrapped around it in the seventeenth century. The whole educational movement of the present is, in its essential features, a protest against a narrowness from which the world has suffered too long.

It is a matter of regret that general reformatory movements are usually attended with objectionable manifestations. While it is a mistake to say, as Carlyle has done in a cynical moment, that the people of a country are "mostly fools," we have everywhere one-sided men who as enthusiasts advocate extreme views. In the Reformation, a movement so rich in historical illustration, there arose by the side of the reformers a body of fanatics who sought to turn their newly-won liberty into license, and to overthrow the existing order of society. These enthusiasts are a hindrance to the cause that they seek to advance. It is greatly to be regretted that recent educational reforms have been retarded by the inconsiderate and often radical measures of one-sided and superficial men. It is through their unfortunate influence that the name "New Education," which would be so convenient to characterize the educational tendencies of the present day, has been robbed of its honorable significance.

Education has needed, not sweeping radical changes, but a natural expansion and improvement in order to adjust it to existing conditions.

Returning to an application of the two principles laid down above, we find that they relate to the study of natural science, and civics no less than to the study of language; but it is in reference to the languages that their influence will now be briefly traced.

1. These principles require that a greater emphasis be placed on the utility of languages for practical life. To study a language, whether ancient or modern, for disciplinary purposes alone is not the wisest use of time; for discipline can be secured by other studies which offer the additional advantage of being serviceable in after life. Besides, a study pursued only for discipline is apt to lack that interest which calls the student's powers into the most healthful activity. The mental effort that is the result of compulsion and against which the student's feelings constantly protest, tends to rob the mind of its elasticity, blunts its perceptions, and weakens its creative power.

2. These principles are unfavorable to the old theory that grammatical drudgery is the best mental discipline. The gymnastic theory is only partly true. Education is not a mechanical leading forth of the various powers, as it is too often conceived to be. The etymology of the word education—*e*, out, and *ducere*, to lead—has often been grossly misunderstood. Education is a development that is secured by activity in assimilating truth suited to the mind's condition and wants. Languages should be studied in order to be mastered, with the ultimate view of acquiring their treasures of thought. Other ends in language study are entirely secondary. To study a language simply as a mental gymnastic, to hold the student for years in what Milton calls "the flats and shallows" of language, is an educational mistake. Neither a grammarian nor a philologist represents the highest type of culture. Though the world has been slow in realizing it, Milton was right in saying "that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned



man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only."

3. These principles supply us with a new standard in judging of the results of education. A perfect man is the ideal aimed at. Physical, mental and moral culture—the ability to judge correctly and to act wisely in the present—this is the object to be sought. The pale scholar with stooped shoulders who lives in an idealized past, who thinks more about mythology than about Christianity, who can talk learnedly about Greece and knows nothing about Germany, who can explain the causes of the Peloponesian war, but not of the Franco-Prussian struggle—such a man may be interesting and useful, but he does not represent the culture demanded at the present day, and especially in this country. The educated man needed to-day is one that makes his knowledge of the past subservient to the present, and finds his highest intellectual efforts and pleasures in the age to which he belongs. A man should not make himself an anachronism.

4. These principles encourage the practice of presenting to the student what is best in human thought. The ancients are estimated at their true worth; but no self-delusion or unintelligent enthusiasm is allowed to attribute to them imaginary excellencies of thought or style. They belong to the youth of the world; and the best results of human thinking, whether in philosophy, politics, morality, or religion, is not embodied in their writings. Whatever they have produced worthy of remembrance, whatever conduces to the great end of education, is retained; but the student is directed to the results of modern thought and investigation for what is to equip him for his place in the world. There is scarcely a department of thought, excepting perhaps oratory and poetry, in which the ancients have not been superseded. To cite but a single instance, was not Macaulay right, with his own or Gibbon's great work before him, to characterize the history by Herodotus as "delightful childishness?" While the ancient classics, as the original sources of much of modern culture, are not to be neglected; while every comprehensive scheme of education must embrace them, either in the original languages or in good translations, they are not to be exalted, either by the force of tradition or the blindness of prejudice, into an undue pre-eminence. Our highest studies must be in the more fully developed thought of the present day.

Such is believed to be the trend of the educational world, together with that which gives its movement force. Along with the natural sciences, history, civics, and the mother tongue, the modern languages, especially French and German, have acquired greater prominence. This prominence is destined to increase, as international relations become more intimate, and as these languages embody from year to year the best achievements of human effort. As mankind progresses from age to age, it is naturally led to reshape education to suit its needs.